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EDITORIAL.

THE production of this Autumn "Poetry Quarterly" has been achieved in spite of Blitzkrieg conditions. Editorial decisions have had to be taken while the banshee wails and the squadrons drone overhead. The Editor has frequently broken off the perusal of MSS. to watch the latest air battle in the blue sky, pocked with the white puffs of the shell bursts. Nights when it has been possible to sleep have been rare, so that not only the modern Homer but his editorial staff must be excused for nodding at their desks. We believe, however, that our readers will find that this issue is in no way inferior to those of quieter and more normal days. Poetry is still a spiritual value, a quiet, pleasant room in the unconquerable inner fortress of the minds of free men and women, however hard pushed in their struggle for survival. To dwell overmuch on the horrors and the evil side of war is not a good thing for the nerves or the spirit. We intend to continue to provide that spiritual refuge from the terrors and trials of the immediate world which only the deeper thought and feeling occasioned by the reading of poetry can give.

OF POETRY AND THE CELTIC SOUL

By

NORAH De COURCY BEATTY.

POETRY, by which it is not necessarily meant verse, is even more dependent on the receiver than the other arts. The reader has to go into what he reads in order to see the colours of the picture painted for him by the poet-artist. He may enter this picture gallery alone, or he may lead others to see with him by reciting aloud—or even just speaking his thoughts. Either way he can experience that inborn thrill of the unknown which lures men into the desert places to seek for old stones. The words may be strange—and yet we could say, like the man to whom the Philosopher in "The Crock of Gold" brought the message from Angus Og: "I do not understand your words, but they make my heart to dance and sing within me like a bird." Then suddenly the light gleams—the Sun comes out on the far peak of the mountain, and we take courage to go further, strengthened by the knowledge that has come in that moment of time.

Peoples are formed as much by their native countryside as by any other factor, and, among other common characteristics, the Celts and the Orientals have a deep love of Mystery. In the East the heat causes mirages, and among the hills and bogs of Ireland the eye is deceived at every changeful moment.

This sense of mystery has grown into the Celtic races so that they carry it with them wherever they go. The veiling of bare fact is to them indeed so precious that there is no translation of "Yes" and "No" at all! This might appear to be a form of dishonesty to the hard-headed Saxon but let him once set foot on the magic soil of Ireland and even he becomes enchanted by the "little people" and softened by those caressing mists, teasing glimpses of colour vanishing as fast as they come, galloping silently over the mocking hills and timeless mountains. He is drugged by the little mountainy

breezes, so bewitchingly flavoured with turf-smoke or oily gorse—and often becomes in the end "more Irish than the Irish."

In matter-of-fact England it is difficult to see why one should have to take down a heavy iron gate from its hinge on one side, having untied a piece of intricately knotted rag at the other, in order to enter a field—considering the goats and things which are kept in the field are easily able to walk over the bank or through a gap in the wall, should they be inclined to wander, and frequently do so—to no one's surprise or discomposure—but after the first whiff of the spell he will cease to query anything so obvious.

We are all born with a love of the unknown. The dark and dank cellar or secret passage is a never-failing fascination to every child. "What is down there?" He takes a candle with him when he goes to see—something known to hold on to—but when it blows out, he still keeps on in his search. The mathematician is fascinated by the unknown quantity and lured by the adventure of the "problem"—but he knows at the same time that certain rules will always be sure—and he is not afraid. And so it goes on all through the adventure of life. Sometimes there is a struggle between the two, Mystery and the unknown and Security and the known, and a choice has to be made. Usually Mystery wins, and in spite of the pain of severing old familiar ties and pulling up roots, few regret their obedience to nature's pull of adventure. Indeed, the man who has "played for safety" all his life is a poor creature, creeping regretfully and apologetically through the years, like a pale wood-worm that never issued forth from under his stone.

No one loves his country more than the Irishman, and yet no nation has sent more of her sons and daughters overseas. In this the history of Switzerland, that brave little symbol of Liberty built on the strong rock of Christianity, and whose people are also partly Celtic, tells the same tale. The pain of partings is in many a song—and in many old eyes—but the keening is never far from the pipes and the jig. not through any

shallowness of feeling, rather the contrary, because nature made death and life, sorrow and joy, parting and meeting, so close that you never know when the rain stops and the sun comes out—both seem to happen together. A Banshee's wail is not musically complete and there is a minor undercurrent in the gayest tune on the pipes.

In Ireland at night, the Moon, Queen of Mystery, plays fancy tricks through the clouds, lighting up a white cottage which disappears and is no more to be found a second later. You wake to find the mountain looking in through your window, so close and friendly—but it will take many hours to reach its foot, and half-way up an impenetrable shawl of a cloud stops your progress, and you never see the top of that mountain and may well get lost but a few miles from your starting point.

Man is always trying to pin down the infinites. He divides and sub-divides all forms of creation into atoms and electrons in an endeavour to have knowledge —and so power—over all things. But as he stands thinking out the mathematics of the stars, some Pixy behind his back clicks its fingers and laughs like a mountain stream and that poor man lives the rest of his life as an astronomer—a sort of hermit who can only see planets and stars as pieces of burning metal—and is denied the sight of the velvet heavens as a setting for the nightly antics of the Man in the Moon, Witches on broomsticks, or the Devil himself riding on a green-eyed cat.

All things have their seasons, and Autumn is the poet's season. In the full note of the sighing waves, in the grandiose colours of a September sunset, the fearful thinness of a robin's song, the wild rushing of the wings of geese as they fly, hurrying methodically, to their winter feeding ground, the soft loveliness of heather covered moors—in all these the poet feels the hand of a Power beyond normal human ken. Pan? Leprecauns? How can he doubt these when he feels his heart shiver as his soul takes a leap out of his body?

They only deceive themselves who try to deny this supernatural world around us; the momentary glimpses through the curtain belie us. Men are like goldfish in

a bowl. We think we live only by means of the water around us and the ants' eggs which we find convenient when we are hungry, but the people outside the bowl can see that we have to have air as well. We come up to the surface—we seem to be drawn up sometimes—and take in a few gulps to carry us on. It is true that if we are taken out of the water and exposed to the air for any length of time, we die. It is too strong for us. We need the steadying influence of the water to keep us what is called normal, for we are meant to live in the goldfish bowl for a certain time. Sometimes a bubble of air goes on existing under water, attached to a piece of weed. The leaf becomes beautiful, and if a goldfish looks at it through the bubble, it looks larger and more elaborately veined than he had thought it was. It is as though a poet showed his fellow a sunset. It looks to him beautiful and different, though it may not appear the same to the other fish in the bowl, who probably think he is mad.

The surface of the goldfish's water-bowl is the "starry floor" of that outer world the poet in us pierces and which is at its most transparent in the bland maturity of the twilight of the year.

In his autobiography, "Patches of Sunlight," Lord Dunsany answers the question, "What is it to be a poet?" in the following words:

> "It is to see at a glance the glory of the world, to see beauty in all its forms and manifestations, to feel ugliness like a pain, to know Nature as botanists know a flower, to be thought a fool, to hear at moments the clear voice of God."

It is the poet in us which enables some of us to "lay aside life-harming heaviness"—even in the midst of all the nervous bustle, the horror and dread of modern warfare—and to bathe in the tranquil pool of memory —personal, racial and eternal; to conjure up scenes of beauty when all around is ugliness and squalor; and to create from these visions something whose "loveliness increaseth." The starry floor *is* always. Time and earthly conflicts make not a ruffle of difference. It is only if we do not use the key that the cobwebs fill the key-hole. The treasure within does not decrease either in value or quantity.

TO AMERICA.

Awake from out your slumbers, sons of light:
Awake and loose the torrent of your power;
Fling yet your wall of manhood, Freedom's dower,
Athwart the hordes which swarm in Hate's despite:
Awake and with your stars of purest might,
Your pennons striped that point the watched-for hour,
Strike back and make the murderer-soul down cower
Whose flaming Hell-strokes ride this witches' night!

O offspring of the self-same mother air,
Self-nurtured in the selfsame ancient pride,
Strike quickly lest your temple meet the tide!
Strike lest the ages in a great arraign
Write on your doors, blood-spattered by our stain:
"The children of a long-forgotten prayer!"

ARTHUR ROW.

FOR FREEDOM.

Twenty generations have watched the dust
Heap on the disused path of power-lust;
Since Magna Charta, like a surgeon's lance,
Set free the cancer from the soul's advance.

And now, though England hear marauding shock
Yet she will stand, a bastion rock;
Her cause is freedom's cause, whose flag unfurled
Shall wave defiance at the threatening world.

We do not fear the terror of the skies,
Nor do we hide when ruthless tyrants rise.
We shall not fall, while Britons rule the sea,
While all our hearts still throb with liberty.

ROBERT GREACEN.

DORSET—WARTIME.

Dream, Dorset, dream in that soft sleep forever,
That fell upon you when the years were dim.
Stir not at distant thunder or foul weather,
Or noise of war beyond blue Purbeck brim.

Rest, Dorset, rest, wood-wrapt, bird-blest for ever,
Untroubled by the mania of time—
Eternity's a shepherd on the heath;
The wind waits not for reason or for rhyme.

Smile, Dorset, smile, still is the sun afloat
In God-girt waters, splendid over all.
Still is the moon deep anchored in the night;
Still the star-chorus every evenfall.

Laugh, Dorset, laugh, still butter-gold the fields;
Still the slow Stour steals slumbering along.
Still reapers to their cottages return
In early twilight; humming some Wessex song.

Stay, Dorset, stay, all that we dread is change.
Stay, so that when our present fears are over,
We may come back and seek your Peace again;
The quiet, and the kingcups, and the clover.

R. D. BIRCH.

SONG IN STORM.

Oh! gallant blackbird, singing loud
Amid the whip of rain and wind,
Triumphant over racing cloud:
Yours is the spirit of man's mind
Which pain and sorrow cannot kill;
In a chaotic world, his voice
Can triumph over storm, and still—
Beneath a darkened sky—rejoice.

DOUGLAS GIBSON.

AN OLD HOUSE.

Behind the door is a whispering sound and the patter-pit-patter of feet
Yet when you creakily open the door there is nobody there to be found
A dusty empty quiet room, silent, silent, as a tomb,
There is no one there to meet.
What are you seeking in emptiness? And was it really a sound
That you heard?
Or the patter-pit-patter and sweep of a bird
Flying round and round,
Then out
Through the broken ghost of a window
Whose mouldy curtains are like a shroud.
Don't shout
The sound of ordinary voices is really uncommonly loud
In this dusty, empty room
Like the shadow of a tomb;
You can hear your heart beat
In the silence.
Go softly; and creakily close the door
Then listen once more.
Is it a sound—
That rustle and whisper of voices?
Or the patter-pit-patter and sweep of a bird
Flying round and round
Then up and out through a sunlit window?

This is the way of the end of the world:
The patter and flick of a mouse,
And the echo of beating of wings of a bird
In a dead house.

J. N. PARROTT.

LITTLE THINGS.

I have always cherished little things.
Lamps at evening
lighting a rain-drenched street into a sea of gold.
A woman's laugh
silvering across a tobacco-hazy room
like a shaft of sunlight in a sombre place.
A sudden street-glimpse of a face,
beautiful, holy,
like a flower blossoming on a dung-hill.
The purple frown of the hills,
mere transient shades for all their solidity.
A white rose with dew upon it . . .
Parted lips: breath quick-indrawn . . .
A smile, a tear, a kiss. . . .

Let us return to little things.
Away from the diabolical intricacies of the machine
and the sordid reckonings of the money-market.
Away from superficial cleverness and skilful paradoxes;
away from birth-control, and little sickening things
without names.
Away from combines and syndicates;
away from advertisements and tinned foods.

Let us return to little things.
To simplicity.
To peace.
To the fundamental pattern of life:
to beauty.

ROY McFADDEN.

TRUTH.

Earth has
An eye of glass,
That bares the soul of all
Who pose before the camera
Of Life.

FLOZARI ROCKWOOD.

FUGUE.

Pencil-pointed
Rays of rubies
Concentrated
To their focus,
Blood and darkness
Made these pinnacles.

These cathedrals made like prisms
This keen-pencil-pointed, Gothic
Architecture sharp and frozen,
Blood and darkness, incense burning
In dull lamps that no time quenches
Lift an organ-loft of pinnacles
To the cascade of the rubies,
Fretted flowing treble point-lace
On the ground-bass of the darkness.

Pennons stream from lofty pinnacles,
Spears of darkness tipped with rubies
Now are brandished by the forest;
Through the forest, nave and chancel,
Swings the sombre, sword-winged hawk-moth,
Sets a spear against the cypress,
Swings a scimitar through the branches,
Downward drooping, windless, voiceless.
Where once hung the moth's sarcophagus
Veined with webs of rose and silver,
Darkness hangs a shroud—the cypress,
Scimitar moth and spear-head pinnacles
Lulled with opiate incense sleep.

T. WESTON RAMSEY.

IRON AND FLAME.

[In Memory of John Davidson, 1857-1909]

> Night—it was always night
> And never a star above.
>
> New Ballads.

Though power filled each ringing word,
The world, indifferent, scarcely heard.

Unheeded by the hurrying throng
He toiled, he dreamt, he laboured on.

Iron and flame fashioned all his verse,
He faced mankind's indifference and curse.

Poet, who loved the woodland ways,
The blackbird's note—the hawthorn's blaze.

Who amidst the clatter of Fleet Street
Beat out a music sombre and sweet.

Who touched the depths, who touched the heights.
Who loved all London's sounds and sights.

He sang of heaven, he sang of hell;
Of rolling breaker and dusky dell.

Of wood and mere, of dawn and dew;
He wrought to create the world anew.

Aloof, alone, scorned by mankind,
He left immortal beauty behind.

Body and soul at last set free,
In the peace of the emerald sea.

AUBREY LEES.

APPLE GREEN.

She lay, the lazy, pretty thing,
Within the hammock deep.
And lazily and prettily
She swung herself to sleep.

She wore a dress of apple green,
Her little feet were bare,
And all the sunlight of the day
Was captured in her hair.

Her artless loveliness was such
That how could I resist her?
And, lightly as a butterfly,
I bent my head and kissed her.

She could not know my liberty,
So wrapped was she in sleep,
But surely to her smiling mouth
I saw a dimple creep;

As if the lazy, pretty thing
In dreams could understand
That one had dared to kiss her lips
Who should not touch her hand.

ELIZABETH TEMPLE WELLS.

SONG.

Tell me the touch of water,
Tell me the gleam of blue,
Tell me the scent of clover,
That I may speak with you.

Tell me the sound of a fiddle,
Tell me the taste of wine;
That when you say you love me
Your meaning may be mine.

L. COLE.

PERSONALITY.

The room is dark, the autumn wind is singing
Beyond the window where the sky is gold,
And you are there, pale-featured in the shadows,
As strange and dark and lovely as of old.

The fire is dim, the western light is fading,
We sit in silence in the silent room;
I cannot see your eyes and yet I know them,
I know your face and see it in the gloom.

If life were this, if one could dream forever,
If I could have you always quiet and near,
But you will go and leave me to my dreaming;
I cannot keep you, strange and far and dear.

MABEL E. ALLAN.

"AND SHADOWS WE PURSUE.

Love, as a rare find,
Is under rated,
Meseems by mankind,
Who are ill fated
His shadow to chase
While losing the race.

Is love recognized
If he make parade
In lowly disguise;
And quickly afraid
The false lover flies
And after love cries?

By love's sacrifice,
Not striving to bind,
Not asking the price;
And ceasing to mind
What form love may take;
We win for love's sake.

JOAN BEVAN.

CORN HARVEST.

With high rocking tiers
the last waggons turn
from the deep shadowed lane,
festooned with stray ears,
to stumble through trodden down fern
to the rick burgeoning with grain.
The pitchers are posturing shapes, half lit
by the sun
now setting on meadow and stack.
The horses, ghost steeds,
contentedly wait
and champ at the weeds
or tear at some fallen oat shock
with jangling bit.
The voices grow soft
and fade with the light.
The acrobat swallows skim stable and loft
now sombre and black,
and the dim farmhouse clock
chimes peace to the night.
Corn harvest is done.

LEONARD CLARK.

FATE.

Shadows dancing,
Moving: playing
With sunlight
On brown gravel.
Play on, play on.
Finish the game,
'Tho Fate declares
The shadows to win.

FRANCES PAUL.

AUTUMN WALK.

A lonely poplar brushes dim grey sky
There on the distant skyline, far above
The climbing path: a misty stillness hangs
Suspended, silence that only I
May break. The fingers of a slim night-budded ash
Brush dewdrops on my sleeve, a hawthorn tree
Is hung with lighted scarlet globes, and strewn
With a dead creeper's withered, languid lash.

A Rajah's rubies deck the yellowed strings
Of bryony, and on the caverned yews
The evil thoughts of goblins are entombed
In coral caskets that the winged Puck brings
Swift as the light, from shores a world away.
The aspen's silver curls are tipped with gold:
Has her strange pain found solace then, in learning
Autumn has deeper loveliness than May?

MARGUERITE EDGELOW.

NOVEMBER'S GOLD.

Gold days! The soft old-gold of dreams
Makes kings and queens of the great trees,
And flowers—from heavenly lands it seems—
Wear tints suffused in ecstasies.

I think some angel of pity knew
How shame and grief would make us dumb,
When the leashed wind of hatred blew,
That ached for its black hour to come.

Despair of humankind were ours,
Had we not felt your passing wing!
Had you not dropped this gold! These flowers
Of joy's exotic blossoming!

FLORENCE M. BRADFORD.

Set on the autumn head
of the red forests, the town
sprawls upon leaf and blade
but cannot keep them down:

though stones cover the seed
the root journeying under
carries the pregnant bud
and the weed in its hooked finger.

Though pavements level and white
batten the green wave down,
under the wheels and feet
there flows the ancient corn:

and he for whom in dreams
those buried autumns wheel
has seen their coming flame
leap through the crumbling wall . .

ALEXANDER COMFORT.

THE CLOUD.

High above the houses,
in sky as clear as water—
blue tinted—
hung a cloud:
Feathery white, motionless,
five fair fingers had it,
outstretched, but not held rigid:
It was like a hand summoning,
calling a halt:
In my heart I knelt
humbled,
For it had imperiousness
of benediction;
Benediction of the Beautiful.

WALTER DOWDING.

DOPE.

An unknown Spirit claimed my soul last night:
He beckoned me and led me through the land
To that lone vale where Halls of Silence stand,
In misted forest, ghost-like to the sight.

We seemed to drift above an endless road
Where, 'neath pale stars, were countless treasures strown;
Scraps of pure verse, on tattered vellum shown,
Torn canvas, limn'd in artists' magic mode.

And perfect limbs, half sculptured from the rough,
Statues of jade, carven with Sinic skill;
Plans for a church, an aeroplane, a mill,
And music-harmonies, bescribbled on a cuff:

Guitars and mandolines and swords and ships,
And moulded clay, and flower-garlands dead,
And battered shapes of brass and gold and lead;
Saddles and stirrups; balls and boots and whips:

Books, old and new, all stained and ripped and torn;
Cars and machines: lamps, costly robes and fans,
And furniture, and kitchen pots and pans
And jewels queens or fairies might have worn.

Such priceless fruit of man's exploring thought:
Such waste of perfect exquisite design!
May one not cleanse? or finish? or refine?
All hopeless wreckage? Thrown away for nought?

Flung in forgetfulness, and trampled under feet—
All these fair fragments, these sweet tasks begun,
As, reckless, deaf, crazed, greedy, blindly run
Their lost creators, through Destruction's street.

NINA WITHEROW.

THIS BRIDGE.

A protest by a newly-wed who was warned that Bridge was a necessity of social life.

They that are wed shall shut the door on strife;
They need no Bridge to cross the ways of life
Who lead their suit of hearts and play their game
Of "love speaks to laughter," finding others tame;
Whose cheery hours expel camelious humps
In seeking lovelier truths than "What are trumps?"
No man can contract for a longer day,
He wastes his hours who deals them out in play;
Who binds his wits to bits of coloured cards,
And views books, art, and music as discards.
False knaves, the Kings and Queens that he enthrones,
And joins, within an ace, these witless drones.
His life's successes "slam" to as he scores 'em,
And leave him dawdling ponte asinorum.
Let the pack on with motley coloured suits,
While we haste Eastward from their shrill disputes.
What have the sunrise, you and I to say
When the wide beams give us their shining day?
What care I for the four hand transient deal?
Two hands clasp all the happiness that's real.
Nor vulnerable the hours that love has scored;
Each wins from each, what each can well afford.
The lead is mine, I stay to count no pips,
The deuce of hearts shall lead me to your lips.

RUDOLPH BURNEY.

PIE CRUST

The wheels that make the nation hum
Are geared to cogs of human feeling.
An apple still remains a crab
For all your polishing and peeling,
And no two apples are the same,
Though they may seem so on the tree.
Puppets and numbers ne'er shall have
Lips that caress, and eyes that see.

RICHARD E. WALKER.

DARTMOOR WEATHER.

A swift mist rolls across the moor
And surges round each straggling tor.
The shaggy ponies, wild and small,
Seek shelter by the grey stone wall.
The soft tread of their unshod feet,
Fog-muffled, mingles with the beat
Of steady, driving, drenching rain,
When lo! the sun breaks through again
And bright against the sky is shown
A bridge of dazzling splendour thrown
From Coombe to Cleave, its hues in part
Reflected in the deep-pooled Dart.
While lifting mists reveal the sight
Of hilltops bathed in silver light
And cobwebs slung from gorse-spike tops
Bejewelled with scintillating drops.
Dark storm clouds gather overhead
But sunbeams still their radiance shed
On streaming rocks and soaking heather
Grey skies and sunshine! Dartmoor weather!

L. P. BEAUFORT

DUNKIRK.

A name of splendour to the end of time,
A symbol of the grandeur hidden man
Projects aloft to realms of the sublime,
Beyond the reach of evil's crooked span.
There came a call across the summer sea,
From men beleagured on a poisoned soil,
To men, their dauntless brethren of the free,
And to their souls in little ships of toil.
The screaming spawn of death on high they spurned,
In knightly scorn they slew the terror's might,
And only chivalry their senses burned,
A beam of beauty on degraded night.
So shall the story live on freedom's lips,
The hero in the soul of little ships.

H. L. SENIOR.

IN THIS GARDEN.

IN this garden it is forever early morning; the air is fresh and sweet but a little chill; flowers are beginning to waken to the slanting sunlight that strikes the high wall; but there is no sound in this garden, no bird song reflecting upon the ear nor rustle of leaves. This garden is dead, an exciting waste land of dream and memory, intermingled with the shadows of those phantoms that play across the brain, a blind hope to soul and spur to heart. The footsteps that cross the grass are those of ghosts; and the roses against the wall, dark-red, musk-white and pink, have no scent. A kind of parchment life records sadness and gaiety; the loving or the distorted wish occasionally has its way. But the real life is expelled, held home by the impassable barriers of darkness and no mercy. That is why the daffodil, proud at stalk, wears the strange bewildered look of the friendless; and the desolate violet listens for a further country.

"Such starker frenzies are embosomed here
As greet the fallen, not the rising year."

In this garden wander the lost desires of the unfortunate to whom other gardens are hateful, plantations desperate. Here are lovers bound by the cold ivy and lingerers from lilac and hyacinth, all new drowned in the dark round their dear temples. In this garden like meets like and the sad mournful smile is united to the affectionate glance, when each day is no longer a disease but a part of all-days-obliterated-in-time, a forever early morning time; and each footstep on the grass is that of a ghost.

No birds sing in this garden, for no stirring nor movement even may break the silence. But sometimes there are imagined sounds not usually heard in gardens. The sea is sonorous in dark caves below the cliff. A cold song from a grotto brings comfort to many. The brave swelling chorus from a military opera distorts to a vision of plunder with rapiers and red cloaks. Loud applause congratulates a lively dancer as you sit at your

small round table in the corner and sip at a white wine. All these have power to dwell here, these and other like them may not be denied.

In this garden there is often the sadness of no accomplishment, yet the garden walks are secret and tender. The Prince of All-Love is a wanderer here, no less the Princess of Too-Much-Despair. Their passionate outpourings are heard where the boudoir enlarges upon the cavern and the air sings with laughter and wailing. Yet the silence remains unbroken, and the sleep of imagining and forgetfulness serves both as a comfort and a reproach.

At a certain hour, and it is like May or June, there is a lady who is dressed usually in red or blue taffeta, her gown expanding in an Elizabethan fashion. The frigid power in that lonely face reminds one of all early mornings when joy comes to an end and sorrow begins. It is she who slowly paces the garden, blessing the sorrowful and weeding out hearts that have died. For she leads away the hearts of all unfortunate ones and buries them carefully, hoping that in this garden they may breathe again and some day blossom. The world that she offers is an imaginary one and yet it is real enough for those who follow disaster, who scarcely live.

The corners of the garden are four visions, different to all people.

Lost at sea. As the ship churns through the boiling waves, vainly striving through relentless water, the mariners drink and sing on the decks. Unaware of doom, each one who is beautiful drinks and sings. By practice they have learnt to keep a balance against even the greatest heaving; so they do not know when a death heaving may seize them. The waves gape. Even now the ship begins to tilt; now but for one moment more they riot, and then it is wrecks in darkness, bodies in the storm. Only to the newcomer is the disaster revealed and his eyes show a great despair to which no one will listen.

The lady in green. With face a little dazzled she raises her hands and betrays a cat. She is the mockery

behind memory; her voice wanders among rivers and is lost. There is no triumphant retaining of this Yggdrasil, for her purpose is aimless, her will obscure; she plays both to the left and to the right. Yet her smile says that all days are the same and that fear is constantly lurking.

The enchanted room. Here everything is dissolved to make those mists from which a few people have fashioned handsome enough cloaks. Some who seek this room go by mistake to the drawing room and there meet two old Victorian ladies who give them weak tea and thin slices of bread and butter; soon they fall asleep. Others find their way to the pantry and die from a surfeit of golden shred marmalade spread on plum cake. The enchanted room is much sought after but is not easily found; there is no good guide to the route and each person is required to work out his own way.

The blind hero. He is alive in clouds from which he swims ashore to shake starlight from his limbs. This poor fellow has a great desire for unhappiness and often neglects the obvious solutions. He wears a sword across his lips and hopes to persuade horror to go into another country. The mazes he threads are troublesome and in their dim corridors he is bound. Yet at the heart's centre there is always a seat for two.

These four represent the whole person who may not escape life so easily. Even to magic gardens fate must follow and destiny be alive; and those who go out by the window into a furious or a clear sky must ultimately return. It is weird to live in the land of dreams but not good to stay there too long, for when sorrow and loneliness have become a comfort it is hard to discover them real and painful as broken glass. This garden I have described is not for play but for use. Take joy there assuredly when it is offered, but see to it also that no ship sinks, that the lady's wicked smile does not affect you, the room be found and the hero see. Let this advice be a comfort to all now wandering desolate; for all unfortunates let there be these stars to shine through their bitter dark.

JOHN WALLER.

TOWARDS PEACE.

By

ELIZABETH BRAITHGEAH.

IN her interesting article, "Poetry and War,"* Marguerite Edgelow gives us many apt quotations to show us that Hitlerism, and the horror of war, cannot prevent the "awareness" of the true poet. She ends in asking her readers: "Which of our present poets will produce the great poetry of this war?"

Is it not more important to ask ourselves who among our poets will produce the great poetry of the future peace?

War is a passing madness, with its high pitch of excitement urging forward men and women to great moments: peace is something which should be durable, and therefore brings with it the tedious moments, as well as anxiety.

Those of us who were children in the last peace know the undermining of morale from unemployment; the haze of conflicting creeds; the horror of the maimed, and crippled minds and bodies. Surely it is this future state which requires the great poet, the great men of other arts, to help with the restoration.

That last peace brought us to understand T. S. Eliot's "Waste Land." Our generation are those who were haunted with the doubt and insecurity he showed in his work. With "Mr. J. Alfred Prufrock," we have "measured out our lives with coffee spoons," and are not yet sure if the "Hollow Men" are not right in thinking:

> "This is the way the world ends;
> Not with a bang, but a whimper."

In the next generation of peace poets, are we still to have the destructive element as the central theme?

It is for the poet of to-day to answer "yes" or "no." In him lies the power to think ahead, to see the future when creative effort, and the re-birth of a richer culture, will need him; when his fellow men will cry: "Give us

* In the Spring 1940 "Poetry Quarterly."

beauty — Give us a conception of a constructive peace.

There will be much bitterness, there will still be the problems of the reduction of space and time, requiring adjustment, and a set of new international values.

In this work, those who ply that weapon which "is mightier than the sword," have their great opportunity for service, for it is they who can find a common meeting place in the great literature of the world, quite apart from race, creed, or political outlook; but the preparation for Peace must be now—while we are still at War. Otherwise they will not be ready for that time when they are needed.

Those poets, who are serving at home or abroad, or who live in neutral countries, might all ponder the words of Mr. Masefield

> "Brood upon beauty, till the grace
> Of beauty with a holy face
> Brings peace into the bitter place.

Our fathers fought for lasting peace; let us make their broken dream a reality, and the words of S. Sassoon no longer a mockery.

> "In fifty years, when peace outshines
> Remembrance of the battle lines."

SHORTER NOTICES.

In his introduction to "The Beggar's Lute," Number One of a new series issued by the Favil Press Resurgam" Younger Poets, Mr. Peter Baker says: "It is my conviction that culture must be preserved in wartime even more securely than in peace. After all, poetry is one of England's greatest heritages, and it should be a sacred task to keep it of, and for, the people." But Mr. Baker does not consider that Messrs. Auden, Day Lewis, MacNeice are at all representative of the 20th century civilisation. They have mistaken the trappings and external characteristics for the eternal elements of human existence. "It is our duty to return to the higher

values, he says. Let the poet remain conscious of his mission as a messenger for something beyond himself." All this is entirely admirable and, we hope, indicative of the new movement of the younger poets away from the gibberings of the thirties to something more profound and beautiful born of the sufferings of to-day.

In "Afterwards, he writes:

> When the shell-drowned songs of summer
> Thrill once again the sun-bound air;
> I shall return to the hills of heaven
> And hear the songs of silence there.

After the war there will be a great silence, the silence of distress and death. May it be broken by the voice of England's younger poets.

WREY GARDINER.

REVIEWS.

The Glass-Blower and Other Poems. Jan Struther. Chatto & Windus. 5/-

Here is a poet who, while yet serving the Muse, has left behind the brittle illusions of the Springtime versifier. The creator of Mrs. Miniver possesses that most enviable quality, "charm." This delightful collection of verse, some of which is already known to many, would prove capable of supplying the appropriate dose of comfort, hope, enthusiasm—or even sympathetic sadness with the "jangling of a heart that's out of tune"—according to the reader's malady.

It would be difficult to make a choice of one's favourite from so rich a selection. At random, "A Definition," "Mood Indigo" and "Variation on an Old Proverb" come to the mind. There is only space to quote the latter:

> Hard words will break no bones:
> But more than bones are broken
> By the inescapable stones
> Of fond words left unspoken.

A little book of rare quality.

In The Midst of Death. Clive Sansom. Oxford University Press.

Eye, ear, heart and touch are served in this small book of poems. A pleasant green cover, restful cream paper and the delight of a good type face stimulate the reader's appetite, which is fully satisfied by the dishes offered.

The war has just flavoured the tone of one or two of the verses, giving them a helpful reality. Some of the prevailing thoughts on what the future may bring are wonderfully portrayed in "Fountain Court,"

> Years ahead, when offices and stores
> Tower like gigantic pyramids of glass
> Above the spires of churches, when the sky
> Is thick with flying shapes
> As the Strand with buses now
> Or the Thames with tugs—
> Will Fountain Court be crowded?

Verse (or Worse). F. W. Thornton.

An understanding, hopeful, animated nature shines in all these poems. There is a homeliness in "To a Gourmand" and "The Tent," contrasting with the slower movement of the lines in "Comfort":

> I was so tired and blinded with despair:
> My heart so weighed with the coming years,
> As heavy hours dragged by on weary feet.
> I thought of you—I almost saw you there!
> And sudden peace drove out my restless fears
> With happiness as keen as it was sweet.

or "The Gate."

A very human selection of verse which will appeal particularly to those who live in or love the Malvern district.

The Twilight of Art and Other Poems. H. L. Senior. The Harmony Press. 6d.

The title poem, with its despairing, bitter note at a present day lack of appreciation of past gods, in the realm of music, architecture and poetry, can only succeed in saddening the reader or in spurring him to champion the cause of modern views. A sad booklet which may yet bring some solace to a kindred spirit out of tune with time.